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ABSTRACT

This paper explores a working hypothesis based on in-depth case studies of student teachers. The hypothesis is that the less precise the dialogue between a student teacher and cooperating teacher, the more likely the production and perpetuation of cultural teaching myths. Teaching myths are identified as over-generalized pieces of cultural folklore handed down from the cooperating teacher, such as: (1) frequent sickness is normal during the first two years of teaching; (2) you cannot reach everyone, so teach to the middle group; and (3) do not smile until Christmas. While teaching myths help novices make sense of competing values or contradictory information in a complex setting, for example, teacher as caring humanist versus teacher as authority and evaluator, they also tend to neutralize knowledge acquired during professional training. Student teaching experiences reinforce and produce powerful cultural knowledge about schooling. The knowledge is delivered in an oral tradition by an expert-teaching-novice model of enculturation, which is well-established in the culture of teaching. Analysis of the case studies leads to the recommendation that preservice teacher education must break away from the "unexamined and theoretically void traditions" through radical restructuring, i.e., through adoption of a professional rather than a cultural model of teacher enculturation. (33 references) (LL)

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Perpetuating Teaching Myths or Debunking Them? An Analysis of the Debriefings between a Student Teacher and A Cooperating Teacher

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RUNNING HEAD: TEACHING MYTHS

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, the author explores a working hypothesis based on in depth case studies of student teachers. The hypothesis is that the less precise the dialogue between a student teacher and cooperating teacher, the more likely the production and perpetuation of teaching myths. Teaching myths are identified as over-generalized pieces of cultural folklore handed down from the cooperating teacher: for example, it's normal to be sick a lot during the first two years of teaching; you can't reach everyone, so teach to the middle group; and don't smile until Christmas. Teaching myths help novices make sense of competing values or contradictory information in a complex setting, i.e., teacher as caring humanist versus teacher as authority and evaluator. The production of myths about teaching is an unintended outcome of pre-professional field experiences.

Student teaching experiences reinforce and produce powerful cultural knowledge about schooling. The knowledge is delivered in an oral tradition by an expert-teaching-novice model of enculturation. In light of the analyses presented here, the author examines the ramifications of the expert-teaching-novice model of field experiences.

INTRODUCTION

One of the purposes of qualitative research is to make the familiar strange, that is, to lay open the familiar for examination and interpretation. There is much in the culture of schools that is familiar to us. For example, as a culture, we share some common understandings about the role of teachers and the role of students.

From a cultures of schooling perspective (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986), student teaching is a familiar school event. For planners of student teaching and for the key participants, namely the student teachers and the cooperating teachers, there are at least two obvious purposes of student teaching. The first is that student teaching is an opportunity for a novice to gain teaching experience under the guidance of an expert. The second purpose of student teaching is an opportunity for the novice to engage in a reflective conversation with the expert about teaching--to really talk about day-to-day work in the setting of a classroom. Logically, it would seem to follow that a reasonable expectation for pre-professional field experiences is that a novice enters into a meaningful, reflective conversation with an expert teacher. A reflective conversation grows out of the teaching situation. Situated in the context of teaching, the conversation is personal and emotional. A reflective conversation is both a process and an outcome of the student teaching experience.

For a qualitative researcher whose task is to make the familiar strange, an unexamined assumption undergirding student teaching is that a reflective conversation does indeed occur. A second unexamined assumption is that the student teacher gains specific professional knowledge about teaching from the cooperating teacher.

In this paper, the reflective conversations between a student teacher and a cooperating teacher are examined. An analysis of teaching myths is grounded in the debriefings between the novice and the expert. A brief review of relevant literature follows.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Cultures of teaching. One of the theoretical frameworks researchers use to examine teaching and learning is a cultures of teaching model (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986). This model emphasizes the insider, or the emic perspective of teaching. Since the researcher wants to understand how the insider frames his or her world, the teacher is the chief data source. An examination of teachers' discourse about teaching makes the common wisdom of teachers public and, therefore, open to investigation. The discourse is in the language of teachers, not the language of psychologists or educational researchers. An emic perspective is in contrast to psychological or sociological.

models which attempt to maintain an outsider's or an objectified view.

Some researchers (Connelly & Clandinin, 1984; Cornett, 1986, Elbaz, 1983) refer to the common wisdom of teachers as personal, practical knowledge. The presence of a strong teacher voice (the emic perspective of teaching) is a characteristic of research about teachers' knowledge. Each voice has a distinct and different way of representing teaching. One way to conceptualize the differences between novice and expert teachers is that the expert voice is different from the novice voice. The differences between novices and experts are described next.

Novice-expert studies of teachers. During the past ten years, a fruitful avenue of educational research has been the examination of the differences among novice, experienced, and expert teachers (Fogarty, Wang, & Creek, 1983; Lavely, Berger, Bullock, Follman, Kromrey, & Sawilowsky, 1987; Livingston, & Borko, 1989). These researchers have produced empirical evidence that novices and experts think and talk about teaching in different ways, e. g., the thinking and planning of experts is longer and more complex than that of novices.

It would seem completely logical, reasonable, and predictable that experts should be different from novices. However, it is not particularly logical to expect that novices and experts can have a reflective conversation with one another. Yet, most pre-professional field experiences can be characterized as an expert-teaching-novice model. In the model, the expert shares craft knowledge about teaching with the novice, relative to the experiences the novice is having. White (1989) and Wolcott (1982) use a rite-of-passage metaphor to describe the knowledge that experts pass down to novices through an oral tradition. It is important to note that in this enculturation model, there is little room for the novice to challenge the expert or to ruminate with the expert about the pros and cons of a particular piece of wisdom. The expert-teaching-novice model of enculturation into the profession is examined below.

The expert-teaching-novice model of learning to teach. Well-described in recent literature about field experiences is the expert-teaching-novice model of enculturation into the profession of teaching. In a chapter entitled "Student Teaching and School Experiences", from the Handbook of Research on Teacher Education, Guyton & McIntyre (1990) write that the expert-teaching-novice model of student teaching is traditional, expedient, and individualistic, not data-based or driven by a theoretical framework. Kleinsasser (1991) and O'Neil and Edwards (1983) examined the discourse of cooperating teachers in conference with student teachers. Findings from both of these studies indicate that the cooperating teacher dominates the debriefing sessions. In her study, Kleinsasser concludes that the discourse between a student teacher and a cooperating teacher occurred at different, incompatible levels. Communicative competence is the set of skills needed to participate in a social-linguistic setting (Saville-Troike,1982). Kleinsasser

maintains that a shared level of communicative competence is necessary for a reflective conversation about teaching. These findings challenge the presumed effectiveness of the expert-teaching-novice model. Sharing a common level of communicative competence suggests that beginning teachers might learn more from slightly more experienced teachers, an idea tested by Australian researcher, Rivers (1985, 1990). Rivers proposes a model in which novices may learn more from teachers who have a similar status in the cultural setting of school. People of similar status are more likely to have a similar level of communicative competence.

One of the under-investigated aspects of the expert-teaching-novice model is that the wisdom passed down from the expert might be myth or superstition. It might be a folklore that characterizes a culture like teaching and is transmitted orally (Ember & Ember, 1981). Ultimately, cultural knowledge passed down from the expert may overpower research-based professional knowledge.

Summary. The dialogue that occurs between a student teacher and a cooperating teacher in the setting of a debriefing about teaching is the result of traditionally held views by members of the professional culture of teaching. The views are institutionalized by schools and colleges of education and accrediting agencies like state departments of education. The model also reflects a cultural perspective which holds that invaluable and unchallenged knowledge can be learned from one's elders, passed down through an oral tradition. The common or obvious reason for pairing novices with experts is that experts will share important craft knowledge that constitutes the wisdom gained through experience. Researchers have not examined the possibility that dissimilar levels of communication, exacerbated by role and status differences, produce teaching myths that the novice accepts from the expert without question.

There is little or no data suggesting that a novice challenges the role authority of the expert in the student teaching experience. Yet, prominent educational policy developers are calling for an increased emphasis on the professionalism of teaching and the development of critical judgment by pre-professional teachers (Goodlad, 1990a, 1990b; Goodlad, Soder, & Sirotnik, 1990). From a cultures of teaching view point, it is unlikely that student teachers would develop a critical perspective about the practice of experts with whom they are paired. Because of status and role differentiation, the cooperating teacher is more powerful than the student teacher. Since the cooperating teacher is also an evaluator of the student teacher, the likelihood of a reflective conversation between the two is diminished even further.

The production of teaching myths that develop within an expert-teaching-novice model of pre-professional field experiences is examined in the context of two investigations. Brief summaries and analyses of the two investigations follow.

ANALYSES FROM TWO INVESTIGATIONS

In this section, findings from two separate investigations are presented. The first was conducted from November, 1987 - May, 1988, with a cohort group of eight secondary language arts teaching interns. They were completing a five-year teacher education program at a major teaching-research university in the Midwest. The second investigation occurred during the fall semester of 1989, in a university community in the Rocky Mountain West. The investigation produced a case study of the reflective dialogue between a student teacher and a cooperating teacher. The purpose of the second study was to examine in greater detail a preliminary hypothesis developed from the first study. Both investigations focus on the emic perspectives of novices about learning to teach English.

Investigation #1. Eight secondary English intern teachers participated in a study that spanned seven months (Kleinsasser, 1988). The chief data source was weekly unstructured interviews during a 14-week teaching internship. Other data sources included structured interviews, classroom observations, and twice-weekly journal entries by the participating teaching-interns. Data were analyzed using a constant-comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Individual case studies were generated for each teaching-intern. Themes about the teaching-interns' epistemology of teaching English were developed for each separate case.

At a second level of data analysis the eight cases were subjected to pattern-matching (Yin, 1989). This developed a general explanation of a multiple set of cases. It also generated working hypotheses for future investigations. The match yielded three under-girding themes across all eight cases. The first theme was one of responsibility or ownership. According to the teaching-interns, real teachers are characterized by their right of ownership to classroom space, students, and the artifacts of teaching, e. g., teacher's desk, mail box, door key.

The second theme identified was the importance of developing interpersonal relationships in a learning setting. The eight pre-professional teachers maintained that literature and writing were low consensus teaching areas, i.e., experts disagree about what may be correct literary interpretation or exemplary writing. In other words, there are many ways to be right. Similarly, speech and drama presentations are high risks assignments for students who may be shy or uncomfortable speaking in front of their peers. For these reasons, all of the teaching-interns in the study thought it was important to establish classroom rapport. One characteristic of a positive rapport between student and teacher is valuing student opinion and encouraging intellectual risk taking.

The third theme identified was that curricular and instructional planning is driven by the constraints of institutionalized time allocation. The work of teachers is

organized by an hourly schedule within a five day week, punctuated by school breaks and holidays. Non-negotiable time constraints may be part of the reasons that teachers feel forced to "cover" a curriculum.

In a final interview, I asked the teaching-interns to reflect about the role of dialogue with their cooperating teachers. Each of the intern-teachers emphasized the importance of gaining knowledge from the expert. They felt that one of the most important outcomes of field experiences was the opportunity to be in a reflective conversation with an experienced, expert teacher about teaching. From the viewpoint of the novices, the quality of the daily debriefings between a teaching intern and the cooperating teacher seemed to be at the core of a satisfying field experience. In the following excerpts from two interviews, Anne describes the "right" cooperating teacher:

> Somebody who recognizes that the job is still a teacher, that I am still a student and they are still a teacher and I'm not their aide...I want somebody with a wonderful personality (laughs)...I think that's important, is what they have to offer me in their own experiences and their own joy of teaching...I would like somebody who's volunteered for the position, somebody who has had, I don't know if it's actual training, but I think more contact with [the university] so they know exactly what their role is because I don't think [the university] makes that very clear. **And somebody who realizes that I am still learning and I need a lot of guidance and evaluation** (emphasis added). (Interview, May 5)

> If I had expressed to her [the cooperating teacher] that I need more feedback, then maybe I would have gotten it. But, I never felt comfortable enough to do that, so I **didn't...I think it's part of the role of the cooperating teacher to teach the student teacher about teaching** (emphasis added). I had just assumed that was part of the role, part of the expectation when you signed up to take on this student teacher. (Interview, May 12)

Greaser says this about being a cooperating teacher:

> I thought about that, being somebody else's cooperating teacher, what would I do, and I think I'd sit down and explain to them, before we started...if it was on the six weeks, I'd do it differently, but if it was on the fourteen weeks, I'd say, "I know you're anxious to teach and you're ready to do [it], but try to sit out for a couple of weeks. Try to get to know the students. I'll have you work one on one or in small

> groups, but we'll break you in that way. Trust me. That's the way I did it. It works out better in the end. **I know you don't agree with it and I know you think you're ready to go and I did too, but trust me** (emphasis added)." (Interview, May 12)

However, much of what the cooperating teachers had to say, as interpreted by the interns, was in the form of generalized statements. For example, the teaching-interns described their cooperating teachers talking in generalities about planning, instructional strategies to maintain classroom control, what would and would not work, and the work life of teachers. Some of the generalities were teaching myths or cultural folklore about schooling which helped the intern make sense of complex, inherently contradictory realities of teaching (Kleinsasser, 1989). For example, mid-way into the internship, the normally healthy interns suffered from colds, headaches, and the flu. In the course of one week, almost all of the participants in the study cancelled appointments. From that point on, I monitored their health closely.

In a final set of interviews, I asked them why they thought they had been sick. I offered the hypothesis that the teaching-internship was stressful and that the stress was manifested by colds and flu. Each teaching-intern rejected the hypothesis. Instead, they offered this explanation. The teaching-interns reported that their cooperating teachers and other teachers predicted susceptibility to illnesses during the first two years of teaching, until they developed an immune system to all of the germs that students bring to school. The interns accepted this generalized, culture-specific explanation of illness. However, the teaching myth failed to account for non-communicable physical conditions like weight loss or conditions like gastric-intestinal discomfort and colitis which were experienced by some of the teaching interns.

Two years of being sick corresponds closely to a three year period of survival and discovery that Huberman (1989) characterizes as the first stage of a teaching career. Huberman reported that one-third of the sample described the induction years (the first three) as painful. Huberman says that the first phase of teaching does not have to be bad, and, in fact, two-thirds of his respondents would support that conclusion. If the induction into teaching is stressful, personally violent, and experienced teachers expect it to be difficult for some beginning teachers, their expectation may account for the production of a teaching myth: it's normal to be sick a lot, at least at first.

In a similar vein, culture-specific (the school being a culture) advice like "don't smile until Christmas" helps a novice teacher make sense of the inherent contradiction that teachers generally want to be liked and appreciated by their students. For example, juxtaposing being liked <u>with</u> being in control and ultimately evaluating and judging student performance creates a competing tension. A teacher must make sense out of these two

competing values. Some secondary student teachers are only four or five years older than their students. Some may have more in common with their students than they have in common with their colleagues or cooperating teacher.

Summary. While the teaching-interns valued the reflective dialogue with their cooperating teachers, the evidence suggests that the dialogue helped to resolve cognitive dissonance about specific contradictions in teaching. The experts, by passing along a teaching myth, provided a culturally relevant answer to the contradiction.

Growing out of the study with the cohort group of eight teaching-interns was an important question about the nature of the reflective dialogues between novice and expert teachers within the setting of student teaching field experience. The investigation reported next was an attempt to carefully examine the nature of the reflective dialogue between a student teacher and a cooperating teacher.

Investigation #2. Darol, a 22 year old student teacher was assigned to Karen's English classroom for a ten week student teaching block during the Fall semester of 1989. Karen was the chair of her high school's English department, a 20 year veteran of teaching and an experienced cooperating teacher. Throughout the ten weeks, Darol and Karen audio-taped their daily debriefings which were transcribed. Our three member team of university researchers (principal investigator and two graduate students) conducted extensive observations of the classroom during the ten weeks. We triangulated the data sources by including audio-taped and transcribed interviews with Karen and Darol. We interviewed groups of students at the end of Darol's student teaching. The university-based researchers kept field notes and reflexive journals, meeting once a week to discuss what we were hearing and seeing. We used a constant comparative method of data analysis to develop working hypotheses and present them to Karen and Darol for their comments at the same time that we were collecting data (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

A content analysis of the transcriptions support what others (O'Neil and Edwards, 1983) have found relative to the nature of the conferences between student and cooperating teachers. Specifically, the cooperating teacher dominated the debriefings throughout the entire ten week student teaching event. Karen directed the topic and its duration. Supporting Tabachnick, Popkewitz, and Zeichner's (1979) findings, Darol's role throughout the ten-week period of debriefings was passive.

The example of discourse below is a lengthy excerpt which provides the focus for analyses that follow. The debriefing from which the discourse is excerpted occurred on November 14, about mid-way into the ten-week student teaching experience.

Karen I don't recall if you've given them any pop quizzes, see, and I give all pop quizzes. I never announce quizzes. Those are just a "did you read this or not." Um, so, you just

set it up in any way you want. It doesn't even have to be quizzes. Anyway you want [something] that starts to set the... and a lot of this is preparatory stuff when you go into your classroom at the beginning of the year. What do you do to set that atmosphere that you want to exist there? You know, what kinds of things do you want to do to set the atmosphere? Well, here I think you have got a little, tiny, mini one. Not to [belabor] this, but (indistinguishable) so when you set this up again. Think about it in terms of setting it up as being part of a message delivered.

Darol Later on down the line.

Karen Do not let it read to them as well, I'll let you try this again. It must read as this is the second extension of it. I would expect more depth out of it, and you need to be more ready than you were last time. (long, long pause) So, then you need to determine whether you want to take any time, really, to teach communication. You know, some of it can be in ten minutes with just a you ask them what is supposed to be happening in groups.

Darol Sure.

Karen (indistinguishable) and it may take you 15 [minutes] or you can do it in two sentences when you say to them, "This is the way groups are supposed to work. This is how -- what I saw happening, and we are going to do it again so I'd like you to be ready."

Darol So. Right.

Karen You know, it just -- just keep setting it up and then you go ahead and work out how you want to differ that when you set it up. Kind of mull through the evaluation of it and you'll deal with that. You know -- how -- this one's easier to do it. One way you write. The other one poses a problem too, but that's not insurmountable. There are ways to get that. So, ok. I mean that was all I was going to say about fourth [fourth hour, Shakespeare course] anyway and um, your analysis pretty well hit on things I already

had questions about, so....My first question at the beginning was if they could use more time to do this and then as the hour wore on and I was watching them, I thought, you know, if I'd been in your place about mid-hour I'd have said forget that. You know, they're not working at this anyway. They don't need any more time. They might because if they really honestly were working and had been prepared to work at it, then it's possible they couldn't really do that in an hour -- in 45 minutes. They might need two days to get that set up. But, you know, that...you tried the first time through and you just make a note to yourself that says, "Next time let them have two days because they really worked at it".

Darol Right.

Karen Uh, but if they're not working that hard at it, or it isn't working real well, then it isn't worth taking the time either. You know, let them run this one through tomorrow and see what happens.

Darol Right.

Karen Who knows what they'll do tonight. So it may come better than you think.

Darol I'm afraid it won't. That's the -- that's the main -- that's even been worse in it for me.

Karen Well, you don't know.

Darol Yeah. I don't. That's true.

Karen So we'll see, because the way it was set up, they could do it alone, because I think you've hit on that. The point is they weren't forced to have to talk to each other. That was a choice thing. If they didn't want to get that security, I mean I would because I wouldn't know what I was talking about, so I would want everybody else's ideas. Um, if they chose not to do that because they know they can go home and do their own thing, that's fine. See, there was no need to intermingle, probably. And I'm not saying I don't think that's wrong. I would have

fallen into the same thing and then I would have just anticipated. So then I would have backed off by saying, "Tough, guys. If you don't want to use each other's expertise that's not my problem. I gave you an hour in class to do it." So, if they choose to work alone, let them work alone. If you set it up the way you're talking about now, then that may reinforce them into having -- I don't know that it will force them, uh, unless you kind of set the scene that you want them -- since they're on the same topic and everything, to change, you know, change ideas.

Darol Yeah.

Karen So. (pause). You can try it again and see if it works differently...better. Um, (long pause). Ok. What else? Offhand.

Darol Just -- the thing I didn't feel comfortable with this, is just I don't know, I mean I guess my problem is I'm not sure where to lead them either. I mean, because I sat down last night and I did try to write down some notes and some ideas, and I tried to offer some of them and then I realized that, you know, I'm not sure and I guess that, you know, like you said, that's where the class is. We don't want to zero ourselves in too quickly and yet, you know, I'm...I'm...I'm worried that some of my comments aren't that constructive. (pause).

Karen Well, uh, I, I'm going to say yes and no and I'm -- but I'm going to also let you off the hook in a minute too. I, I think that's a good realization to come to, ok, and it's one we all do, 'and, you know, we have days when they're really great and we have days that aren't. I would say today, for instance, mine were constructive in for about half the kids and I had nothing in particular to say to a couple of them. I just don't. I will though.

Darol Right.

Karen Two weeks ago I didn't have anything to say to Kerry. I -- nothing would click with me either. I had nothing to say and then all of

a sudden some things, oh, in fact I forgot to tell her -- I'll do that tomorrow. But I had a couple of things click this weekend because I went to two movies and they're both right there and it's right on, and I thought, oh, I've got some stuff to tell her. So, (pause) but I think that's where you start. You start with that insight and it says to you, "I don't know if I really offered you anything today." I don't --

Darol Um hm.

Karen You know, it was all inane. I mean, and then you say, "Ok". Now you look at places where maybe you couldn't have been any better anyway. You could have prepared for weeks and it wouldn't have been any better anyway.

Darol Yeah.

Karen Uh, one, two - places where you know you could have. Um, I don't know, by doing this, that or the other thing, you know, in that context maybe isn't even the place to think about it, but in some other context you think, "Well, I could have been better if I had done such and such." Ok, and then you know what you wanted to work at doing in your own teaching. Um, mine for a lot of times and probably about where you are new. For me, it was knowing I just had to start to getting information. I just didn't know a lot of the things.

Darol Right. I, I felt --

Karen And I mean beginning teachers don't know a lot of things. So, that's how we perennially for teachers in general remain in place and I would imagine...I would say that for all us...if you talk to people who teach, you know, [some] just come to this job to get money. (Lots of loud laughter). They'll tell you that's what they...that's what they do forever. You just learn more and more and more because then you have more to offer, and the thing about teaching that's neat, that I think is, is that's fun to do.

Darol Oh, yeah.

Karen You know, I, I like what I do and I like being around people who are constantly...

Darol That's one of the few things I do that I like to do well...

Karen ...throwing ideas. Yeah.

Darol ...just so far as I finish well.

Karen Well, and that's the fun part and, and so for me it's been constant growth. It's constant growth because I do, I learn in the hall, and I learn at lunch and I, you know, people spur me on to something. So then I go do my own little research things, and that, but that's all the process of getting stuff to kids too. But the first step is saying to yourself that I don't think I have anything to offer. You know, at least in this little part today I didn't. I didn't feel real (indistinguishable). Now, for you and that class. Um, that's real difficult. You know, and I, I again I said more than I intended to. You know, then I would say it and then I would think, "I need to back off." It's an unfair situation in some ways to put you in because, um, it's a difficult class for me to just [get] into. Now, tomorrow won't be. Doing rough drafts as much.

Darol Right.

Karen Uh, although in some ways that's a little bit harder than a regular writing class because it's so focused. What they're trying to accomplish in those compositions is so focused and the problem is, it's all focused right here in my head, because it's been evolving from the day we set it up and it's all set up out of here. So [teacher's name] who teaches this class, couldn't come in and take this class over real easily either. Say he could probably do it easier.

Darol Um hm.

Karen Because he's taught it before he's got a sense of the overall picture. He and I planned it together originally with the (indistinguishable) main syllabus, so he knows exactly what's to be accomplished and you really don't. You know, you've got the syllabus (indistinguishable). You've got a sense of it but you haven't really. You

haven't been in that whole evolving process to know what all that is. So that puts you a little unfair position. So, you're, you're left with trying, trying to grapple with what you...you know you're trying to form some boundaries as you go. And I don't know that that's perfectly fair, and my intent was, uh, my intent was so for you to get some experience with trying to teach a class that isn't taught really.

Darol Um hm.

Karen You know, to try to teach a class that is taught in real subtle ways. It didn't dawn on me before I assigned that to you, but it did when we were talking yesterday or the day before, and I think I even mentioned it. But you know the fact is, those are activities -- a lot of what you use in very small bits in other classes. But this is a whole class of just (indistinguishable) activities. So, it's really a huge example of how you teach through activities and you never, ever really lecture.

Darol Yeah.

Karen Now I did. See, I lectured the first three weeks and I set the class up with all these things I wanted to do and all that kind of stuff, and then I'm done and I just tell them, "That's it. We don't lecture any more."

Darol Yeah.

Karen I sort of mini lecture but we sit in circles and then, like I'm thinking next Tuesday I'm going to do that business with -- I'll see how prepared I am with (indistinguishable) for second period. But anyway they're right at that place that we need to talk about that.

Darol Sure.

In the sections that follow, the discourse between Karen and Darol in a debriefing session is examined. The examination will show how teaching myths might develop.

Teachers' messy talk. When teachers talk about teaching, the discourse is often circuitous and messy, like the segment

below (from pages 9-10) which is culled from the lengthy excerpt. In it, Karen is wondering out loud. Although she is in reflective conversation with Darol, it is more of a conversation with herself about the way the lesson could have been different. What she says is of potentially little value to Darol.

> My first question at the beginning was if they could use more time to do this and then as the hour wore on and I was watching them, I thought, you know, if I'd been in your place about mid-hour I'd have said forget that. You know, they're not working at this anyway. They don't need any more time. They might because if they really honestly were working and had been prepared to work at it, then it's possible they couldn't really do that in an hour -- in 45 minutes. They might need two days to get that set up. But, you know, that...you tried the first time through and you just make a note to yourself that says, "Next time let them have two days because they really worked at it".

For most teaching or research dissemination purposes, teacher discourse like the discourse reproduced in this paper, is edited, shortened, and made sensible to the reader e. g., bracketing additional information to make the discourse more complete for reading purposes. The audience for teacher discourse may include teacher education students or researchers. For the purpose of research reporting, particularly in journals with page limitations for manuscripts, teacher discourse is often paraphrased. The paraphrasing is in the words of researchers, not the words of teachers. See, for example, Greenwood and Parkay's (1989) Case Studies For Teacher Decision Making. Their text is illustrative of a case literature for teaching. The problem is that extensive edits of discourse might not resemble the discourse that student teachers will encounter when they converse with their cooperating teachers in the context of teaching.

Data from the transcribed debriefings between Darol and Karen are in vivid contrast to the transcribed interview data. In an interview, Darol's responses are longer and more detailed, in contrast to his discourse in the debriefings. In an interview setting it was possible for the university researchers to probe and draw out explanations and detail. However, Darol's answers were directed by the interests and skills of the interviewer, which limits an emic perspective on student teaching. The interview data are focused and easier to follow, certainly easier to code.

By contrast, the transcriptions of Karen and Darol's debriefings are hard to follow. Darol's responses are characterized by one word affirmations that he is following along, i. e., "yes," "sure," or "right". Karen's answers to Darol's questions or her insights about broader issues like curriculum development or testing and evaluation are often buried

in long ruminations, as illustrated in the lengthy excerpt above.

Thinking out-loud to understand practice. In the following quotation from The Reflective Practitioner (1983), Schon explains the kind of thinking-out-loud that Karen engaged in:

> Just as reflective practice takes the form of a reflective conversation with the situation, so the reflective practitioner's relation with this client takes the form of a literally reflective conversation. Here the professional recognizes that his technical expertise is embedded in a context of meanings. He attributes to his clients, as well as to himself, a capacity to mean, know, and plan. He recognizes that his actions may have different meanings for his client than he intends them to have, and he gives himself the task of discovering what these are. He recognizes an obligation to make his own understandings accessible to his client, which means that he needs often to reflect anew on what he knows (p. 295).

Reflecting anew, rethinking her understanding of her own teaching practice is precisely what Karen did during the debriefings. But Karen was also the authority figure, the expert assigned to Darol by the university. In an expert-teaching-novice model, it is unlikely that the novice pays attention to, let alone appreciates that the expert continues to learn and relearn along-side the beginner. The novice has no reason to think that the expert would be ambiguous, it contradicts the expert-teaching-novice model.

There is little evidence in the transcriptions or in subsequent interviews with Darol that he saw Karen to be struggling to make sense of her world--struggling every bit as much as he was struggling to make sense of his. For Darol, in the position of the novice, Karen had the answers by virtue of her position alone. For an English major with course work in composition, the words "expert" and novice" carry connotative meaning. In the context of learning to write and teachers of writing, "expert" and "novice" suggest that there is a right way of doing writing which the expert is supposed to reveal (Young, 1991). However, Karen and Darol were struggling to understand different issues at different levels of engagement. In other words, in discourse like that depicted above, Karen probably learned more about her own teaching than Darol learned about his. Darol probably learned even less about Karen's teaching. While Karen was demystifying her teaching practice, Darol was creating a mythology for himself. The following example illustrates the production of teaching myth by a novice.

Developing myths about preparation and planning. A dominant theme of the debriefings was lesson planning. Lesson planning was pre-professional teacher knowledge that Karen expected Darol to have from methods courses. Except for a one-time methods class assignment, Darol had never planned lessons. During

student teaching, he expressed some surprise at the amount of work lesson and unit planning demanded. The segment below is culled from the lengthy excerpt presented earlier in the paper. In it, Karen plants a contradictory idea: sometimes, the length of planning may not increase the quality of a lesson.

> Now you look at places where maybe you couldn't have been any better anyway. You could have prepared for weeks and it wouldn't have been any better anyway.

Appropriate planning was identified as one of Darol's weaknesses by both the cooperating teacher and the university supervisor. Darol agreed with their assessment. Long after the data were collected and the student teaching experience was completed, Darol told me that the one thing he wanted to work on during his first year of teaching was better planning. Yet, in a recent telephone conversation with Darol (February 14, 1991), he told me that while he knew he was "cutting corners in preparing", he remembered what Karen had told him during student teaching: sometimes "you just have to take it [whatever planning you've done] and go".

Planning time means different things to an expert and to a beginner. Darol might have thought that Karen streamlined planning since she had considerably more experience than he had. However, all of the interview and observational data suggest that Karen took planning very seriously. Karen described how she was always thinking and scripting her teaching in her head, e. g., rehearsing teaching scripts while driving in the car. Karen's advice about planning takes Darol off the hook (absolves him for not planning more) at the same time that he is hearing evaluations that urge him to plan more. The messages are contradictory.

Developing myths to make sense of teaching contradictions. Teaching myths help beginners make sense of complex situations that contain contradictions. Myths explain away the contradiction that over-planning may not result in an effective lesson. Myths explain away the contradiction that normally healthy people become sick during the first few years of teaching. While the production of teaching myths neutralizes cognitive dissonance for the beginner, myths may also neutralize knowledge from pre-professional training. As noted by Feiman-Nemser & Buchman (1983), the knowledge from pre-professional training may be impotent in comparison to potent cultural knowledge.

Reflection as the deconstruction of myths. In a discussion about the reflective practitioner Schon (1983) focuses on the professional knowledge that teachers have. He argues that one characteristic of a profession is that it socially legitimizes knowledge, e. g., the knowledge of a professional is specialized or mystified. Schon writes, "... mystification consists in making knowledge-in-practice appear to be more complex, private, ineffable, and above all more once-and-for-all, more closed to

inquiry, than it needs to be" (p. 289). Schon identifies two effects of demystifying professional knowledge: a) it may mean treating professional knowledge as the emperor's new clothes; and b) it may mean that professionals do know something worth knowing, a limited something that is inherently describable and, at least in some measure, understandable by others.

Reflective conversations have the potential to deconstruct a teaching myth. However, it is unlikely that a conversation between a student teacher and a cooperating teacher will lead to a deconstruction. It probably will not since the expert is viewed as having more powerful if not better knowledge to start with. Secondly, the expert evaluates the novice as part of the credentialing process. It is far more likely that myths will be produced as participants in a culture invoke myths to make sense of inherently contradictory information.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A cultures of schooling framework is a useful way to examine student teaching. In the two sets of investigations presented above, the pre-professional teachers had more cultural expectations about student teaching than professional expectations. They expected their cooperating teachers to be the givers of wisdom tempered by the warmth of good-hearted coaching. They expected their cooperating teachers to exert authority and remain in authority. An expert-teaching-novice tradition of enculturation is well-established in our culture, especially in the culture of teaching. As a consequence, student teaching is an ideal setting for the creation of myths about teaching, myths that answer some of the contradictions of a complex professional practice like teaching.

From the circuitous ruminations--sophisticated ramblings--about teaching by a cooperating teacher, the student teacher has to extract a core piece of knowledge to make sense of the here and now. Some of these notions may be propositions about teaching that are stated by the cooperating teacher and are situation specific. The propositions make sense to the cooperating teacher. But, they are abstracted generalities. For the student teacher, they become general-case myths about teaching; for example, extra time for planning may not result in a better lesson, or that beginning teachers are sick a lot.

Pre-professional teacher education has to break away from some of its powerful, but unexamined and theoretically void traditions. One way of breaking way is through a radical restructuring of teacher education. Such a restructuring is proposed by John Goodlad (1990a) and his colleagues at the Center for Educational Renewal at the University of Washington. They urge the creation of a socio-emotional climate of support for a beginning teacher that is system-wide at the same time that it is focused on the professional development of the inductee. The restructuring proposed by Goodlad and his colleagues defuses the

expert-teaching-novice model of enculturation to the profession.

Goodlad and his colleagues have developed a list of 19 postulates, the essential presuppositions to guide teacher education (Goodlad, 1990a; Goodlad, 1990b; Goodlad et al, 1990). Three of the postulates are particularly relevant to the reflective dialogue between a beginner and an expert within a field experience like student teaching. The three postulates are listed below.

> **Postulate 7.** Programs for the education of educators, whether elementary or secondary, must carry the responsibility to ensure that all candidates progressing through them possess or acquire the literacy and critical-thinking abilities associated with the concept of an educated person.
>
> **Postulate 8.** Programs for the education of educators must be characterized by a socialization process through which candidates transcend their self-oriented student preoccupations to become more other-oriented in identifying with a culture of teaching.
>
> **Postulate 15.** Programs for the education of educators must assure for each candidate the availability of a wide array of laboratory settings for observation, hands-on experiences, and exemplary schools for internships and residencies; they must admit no more students to their programs than can be assured these quality experiences. (Goodlad, 1990b, pp. 191-192)

It is hardly a new idea to suggest that pre-professional teachers should be able to think critically, transcend an interest in self, and receive experience in an exemplary school setting. The idea has failed in the implementation stage because the expert-teaching-novice model is a cultural, not a professional model of enculturation. The expert-teaching-novice model does not support the kinds of changes Goodlad et al. recommend.

It would be remiss not to make a final point about the cost-benefit dilemmas of teacher research like the two studies reported here. As Zeichner & Gore (1990) write, the issue is moral:

> A priority in teacher socialization research (in addition) to its value in increasing our collective understanding of the processes of teacher socialization) needs to become one of finding ways to use our research studies to enhance the lives of those who open themselves up to us in these studies. p. 343

An irony of both case study investigations presented here is that they probably didn't help or benefit any of the participants

during the data collection period. In the case of Karen and Darol, the research design emphasized a constant comparative method that asked the participants to react to our tentative conclusions and working hypotheses but did not substantively alter the natural development of Karen and Darol's relationship as cooperating teacher and student teacher. There is no doubt, however, that the next time Karen agrees to take on a student teacher, her interactions with that person will be affected by the reports emanating from this study. In fact, the most important analyses any of us have had about the investigation occurred long after data collection and analysis. If they were here today, both Karen and Darol would say that participating in the study enhanced their lives.

ENDNOTES

1. Names of the teaching-interns in the first study are pseudonyms. The first names of the participants in the second study are their own, used here at their request.

2. The author gratefully acknowledges the work of Julie Matley Weitz and Carolyn Young, graduate research assistants on the second study.

3. The dissertation research (Kleinsasser, 1988) was supported, in part, by a grant from the School Division of the American Association of Publishers. The second study (Kleinsasser, 1991) was supported, in part, by a grant from the Faculty Grant-in-Aid Program of the University of Wyoming.

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